The Pennsylvania German Dialect in York County

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Much has been written and said in the past concerning the phonology, morphology and syntax of the Pennsylvania German dialect, but most of this material has been of a general and all-inclusive nature and has not centered in great detail upon any particular county. Moreover, these so-called "general characteristics" hold pretty largely for the Dialect as it is spoken in and surrounding what might be called the nucleus of the Penna. German territory, that is, Lehigh County. Since this is true and since the Dialect in York and other western counties is more rapidly dying out than it is on the eastern side of the Susquehanna, no one has ever bothered very much to find out just what sort of Pennsylvania German is spoken in the region in question. Little is really known, for instance, of the peculiar differences found in Lancaster County especially with regard to forms and vocabulary, and even less is known about York County.

Perhaps the more exhaustive studies of the Dialect which come to one's mind are those by **S. S. HALDEMAN** ("Pennsylvania Dutch"), **M. D. LEARNED** ("The Pennsylvania German Dialect"), **C. H. Eshelman** ("The Origin of the Pennsylvania German Dialect," ECK No. 2, 9, 16—1935), and **A. F. BUFFINGTON** (Pennsylvania German, A Grammatical and Linguistic Study of the Dialect," ECK Dec. 10, 17—1938; also, "Pennsylvania German—Its Relation to other German Dialects", in American Speech, Dec. 1939). In all of these works there is very little to be found concerning the Dialect in York County and some of its important distinguishing features. Similarly in their treatises of the Pennsylvania German English, **G. G. STRUBLE** (Lebanon Valley College) and **E. R. PAGE** (Central College) in American Speech (Oct. 1935 and Oct. 1937) there is little attention given to York County. Eshleman was the first to mention a few of these county differences, especially as to vocabulary; he was also the first to practically rule out the possibility of a large influence from the Swiss dialects upon Pennsylvania German even in York and Lancaster counties. There is a popular misconception about these two counties which ought to be corrected here and now: the fact that one hears the diminutive ending -li in these counties does not necessarily brand them as having strong Swiss or Alemannic characteristics. The common notion that the Dialect in York and Lancaster counties is filled with Alemannic is false. Truly there are some remnants of the Alemannic surviving today (see Buffington's article in Am. Sp.)—some of these help make up the distinguishing marks of the York and Lancaster County Dialect—but the amount of such influence is comparatively small enough to warrant almost perfect understandibility between speakers there and those in the eastern counties; this would certainly not be the case between a speaker from Kaiserslautern (Pfalz, Germany) and one from Zuerich, Switzerland. In other words, a definite leveling has taken place throughout the various counties, and in spite of any Swiss characteristics in the York Co. Dialect (probably brought over by the Swiss Mennonites who originally settled in Lancaster Co.) the Pennsylvania German spoken there is easily intelligible to our eastern brothers.

That the Dialect in York Co. is on the decline is a truth which is to be regretted. At present only the older people speak it in many sections of the county. In such homes the children remember only a word here and there and they really never learn to speak connected sentences. Among others, the children may understand the spoken Dialect but never learn to speak it themselves; and in a number of homes the older folks use the Dialect only to say something which they do not want the children to understand. One even finds older folks who insist they are "out of practise" and therefore have almost discarded the Dialect. What a contrast to Lehigh County! And yet, I am told that a similar situation existed once in the eastern counties but a strong revival has brought about rich results. York County has offered very little in Dialect literature: at present there is no Pennsylvania German column in the county newspapers (and look at the large number of Dialect columnists in other counties!), no rich mine of lore and language such as is found in the ECK, no poetry, novels, plays, radio programs, etc. in the Dialect such as the eastern counties enjoy. Probably the last writer of note who lived in York County was H. L. Fischer (1822-1909), who was born in Franklin Co. and whose dialect was a strange mixture which cannot be truly called typical of York County. I personally would like to see a revolutionary revival in York Co. before it is too late. Perhaps the Dialect is strongest south of the city of York and in and around Hanover, where many children enter school with very little knowledge of spoken English.

Early History of York County

A brief review of the history of the early German settlement in York County includes the following major group: Palatines, Mennonites, German Baptists, and the Dutch and Huguenot Colony. The Germans were among the first to take up lands west of the Susquehanna. Palatines, German Baptists and Mennonites all arrived about the same time. **GEORGE R. PROWELL** presents the detailed account of these settlements in his "History of York County", pp. 128-143 of Vol. I (Chicago, Beers, 1907). No attempt is being made here to trace the early history of the Palatines and their coming to America. In connection with York County one needs, however, to go back to the famous New York colony and the subsequent settlement in the valley of Schoharie, central New York. This latter settlement was begun in March 1713 (this was part of the original group which had sailed from London in January, 1710) under the leadership of John Conrad Weiser. About six months after their occupancy of this region, Governor Hunter granted patents to seven men of his own province, covering the lands on which the Palatines were now living. The oppressive methods of the new land owners, known as "patroons," proved to be disastrous to the interests of Conrad Weiser and his followers. This oppression was continued until 1720, when Robert Hunter returned to England and was succeeded by Governor Burnet. Rev. Sanford H. Cobb, of Albany, has written an exceedingly interesting account of these early Germans in New York, in which he highly praised the man who led them for ten years (Weiser), and has also described their transfer from the Schoharie valley down the Susquehanna to their settlement in Pennsylvania. I quote here that which concerns the migration to Pennsylvania: "The Pennsylvania contingent left Schoharie in two parties, one in 1722, and the other the next year. Following the stream southward for a few miles, they struck an Indian trail over the mountains to the upper waters of the Susquehanna. There they constructed canoes and batteaux for the carriage of most of the company and their goods, while some of the men keeping near the river drove before their horses and cattle."

These people came down the North Branch to Fort Augusta, near the site of Sunbury, where this stream enters the Susquehanna. Here they were welcomed by friendly Indians. They continued floating downstream until they arrived at the site of Middletown, on the east bank of the river, where they turned their canoes up the waters of the Swatara, along whose banks could then be seen small settlements of Conoy and Conewago Indians. This band of Germans, 33 families in all, moved onward to the fertile region of the Tulpehocken, now embraced in Berks and Lebanon counties. This land had been secured from the Indian chief, Sassouan. A few years after the arrival of these Germans at Tulpehocken a number of them migrated to York County.

The charter granted to Lord Baltimore permitted settlements in the valley of Monocacy, where Frederick now stands, as early as 1712, and a number of Palatines located there during that year, while still others crossed the Potomac into the Shenandoah Valley as early as 1731. Germans were among the earliest to cross the Susquehannan, beginning their settlements in the valley of the Kreutz Creek and Conojohela, in 1730. They could secure no rights for settlements until 1733, when Samuel Blunston, an English Quaker and an agent for the Penns, issued licenses for white settlers to cross the Susquehanna and take up lands within the present area of York County. During the succeeding three years, at least one thousand Palatines settled in the Codorus Valley. They founded the first Lutheran Church on the site of York in 1733. About the same time a Reformed congregation was organized at Kreutz Creek. The Germans began to settle on what is known as Digges' Choice, around the site of Hanover, as early as 1731, taking up lands under Maryland titles.

The land west of the Susquehanna, extending to the eastern slopes of the Allegheny Mountains, was purchased by the Penns from the Indians in 1736. From that time until 1749, when York County was organized, there was a continuous stream of migration into York County. Many of these people came directly from the Fatherland, while others migrated from the eastern counties of Pennsylvania. A few of them were Mennonites and others Dunkers, but a large majority were Lutherans and Reformed. They brought with them the customs of their native land, as well as the church and parochial schools.

The Mennonites

The Mennonites were among the early settlers in the territory of York County. Under the leadership of Michael Tanner, who, in 1749, was appointed one of the commissioners to lay off York County, this class of religionists began to settle in the southwestern section of the county as early as 1738. They took up the rich farming lands to the east and southeast of Hanover, first securing land titles from the authorities of Maryland. A few of them settled between York and the Susquehanna River.

A colony of eight families of Swiss Mennonites arrived in Holland, set sail for America, and in 1709 took up lands in the beautiful Pequea Valley, in Lancaster County, being the first white settlers to clear the lands and cultivate the soil of that region. They were the pioneers of a large immigration of these worthy people, who soon afterward occupied the fertile valleys immediately east of the Susquehanna. Having come to this province at the invitation of William Penn, these Swiss Mennonites lived peaceably with the Indians, who still had their villages along the Susquehanna and its tributaries. They had come under the leadership of John Herr, who has numerous descendants in the counties of Lancaster and York.

These people being pleased with their new surroundings decided to send the good things to their friends in their native land. Martin Kendig was chosen to return to Europe, and the next year he came back to Pequea, the leader of a new band of Mennonites. In 1717 another band of Swiss Mennonites came to the Pequea Valley and settled themselves on lands surrounding those owned by their brethren who came before them. In 1726 a much large immigration followed.

By the year 1732 there were several hundred of these people living in Lancaster County. In 1733, when the Blunston grants were given, permitting settlers to cross the Susquehanna, some of these Swiss Mennonites were among the earliest to locate in the limestone region east of York, and the fertile country of Heidelberg, Penn and the adjoining townships east and southeast of Hanover. They brought with them the Bible and other religious works and soon after their arrival founded a church in the vicinity of Menges' Mills, and one along the York Road, known as Bear's Meeting House, three miles southeast of Hanover.

The German Baptists

The followers of Alexander Mack, founder of the German Baptist Church, began to settle in York County as early as 1738. One colony of these people took up the lands in the southwestern portion of this county, settling there about the same time that the people of the Mennonite faith began to locate in that region. The Bermudian settlement, in the extreme western part of York County and the eastern part of Adams County, was composed almost entirely of German Baptists. Space prohibits the recounting of the early history of this interesting group; their coming to York County is the chief concern here. It seems that the churches at Ephrata, at Conestoga, and one in Chester County attached so many settlers that land became high. So numerous members of the church, as early as 1736, began to migrate to what is now York County. Some went down into Maryland.

The first church in York County by the Brethren was organized in 1738, twenty miles west from the town of York, on the Little Conewago. This was in the vicinity of Hanover. Their first preacher was Daniel Leatherman, Senior. He was followed by Nicholas Martin, Jacob Moyer (Meyers), James Hendrich and others of the early members, a list of which is given by Prowell. In 1741 there was another church organized in the limits of what was then York County, on the Great Conewago, about 14 miles west of the town of York. This was the same year York was founded. Many of the members lived in the present territory of Adams County, in the vicinity of the villages of Abbottstown and East Berlin.

There was another congregation organized within the present area of Washington Township, fifteen miles from the town of York, called the Bermudian Church. The first constituents of this organization separated from the Cloister Church, at Ephrata, Lancaster Co., in 1735, and organized in 1738 in York Co. Many of them were Seventh-day Baptists. The church was considered an offspring of Ephrata, but for a while they worshipped with the Brethren.

The Codorus Church was organized in the Township of Codorus, 11 miles southeast of York, in 1758, and soon after numbered about 40 families in its membership. The first elder of this church was Jacob Danner, a prominent man in the early history of the county and one of the five commissioners appointed to view and lay off York County in 1749.

To be concluded.

Uf emol gebt's en gross Rumor,
Die Betz, die schmeisst em Jake ufs Maul
En Appelkrutze far en Trick.
Der Jake schpringt uf un geht wie'n Gaul
Der Betz noh in der Schtubb rumhaer.
Es waar glei alles gans verschteert;
Die Schtiehl sin um, die Schnitz verschitt,
Der Daadi zankt, 's waer zu verkehrt.

Wie faerdich g'schnitzt, geht's lebhaft heem;
Die Buwe hen die Maed heem g'fiehrt—
"Now esst viel Schnitz, des macht em g'scheit,"
Waar mit "Gut Nacht" recht ernscht eig'fiehrt.
Far'n naegscht Yohr Schnitzfescht hoffe sie,
Doch gehn deel dann en ann'rer Schtep;
Die Betz iss dann em Jake sei Fraa
Un kocht ihm oft sei Schnitz un Knepp.

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(Conclusion)

The Huguenots

The people composing this colony were descendants of the Dutch and French Huguenot settlers of New Jersey. They came from Hackensack and Schwallenberg, in Bergen County. The colonists, who numbered probably over one hundred families, did not come to York County in a body, but gradually, during a period of twenty years prior to the war of the Revolution. They located mostly in Mt. Pleasant and Straban Townships, now in Adams County. An examination of the official records of York County shows that from 1760 to 1770 there was a considerable influx of colonists from New Jersey. Many of them were well advanced in years at the time of their settlement in York Co., as may be noted in their wills and other mortuary papers on file in the York County Court House. Among the first of the Jersey colonists to locate in York Co. was James Pettit, whose ancestor was one of the early Huguenot refugees to New Jersey. As early as 1740 James Pettit possessed a considerable estate on the Conewago. He died in 1771 at an advanced age. Abram La Rue, who died in 1757 and Adam de Gomois, Huguenot pioneers from New Jersey, were among the earliest settlers, and no doubt had much to do with the subsequent influx.

The River Brethren

The River Brethren, sometimes known among themselves as "Brethren in Christ," are a sect that originated along the Susquehanna River, in Conoy Township, Lancaster County, in 1786, and soon after a congregation was formed in York County. The authentic history of this sect is rarely given; the name is sometimes confused with the United Brethren (Moravians) and the United Brethren in Christ. There have been published accounts which claimed to trace the origin to Germany in the year 1705; this statement is, however, inaccurate.

For a more detailed account of the Huguenots and their colony on the Conewago, see the paper read before the Historical Society of York County by Rev. A. Stapleton, 1905. Rev. J. K. Demorest, of Gettysburg, also wrote an article on the history of this colony in York County and listed the members of the Dutch Reformed Church of Conewago prior to 1775.

With these rather brief sketches of the major groups of early settlers in York County as a background, let us proceed with an examination of the Pennsylvania German Dialect of that county as it is spoken today.

Part II

I should like, then, to outline here a few of the main characteristics of the pronounciation and the forms in the Pennsylvania German of York County. I am basing most of this material on that part of the County which is most familiar to me, namely the section east and south of York, although these characteristics are pretty generally true for the whole of the County. I do not say that some of these features do not exist elsewhere (in fact I have heard some in other counties), but I am confining my remarks chiefly to York Co. I am using a German spelling here with doubling of vowels to indicate length; the final **-e** is unaccented as in German; **ae** indicates the open sound; **-er**, the short back **a**-sound as in Pennsylavnia German **wedder.**

Pronunciation: in general the sounds are like those found in other counties but they have been more Americanized. That is, the vowels are inclined to be less pure and the consonants **l** and **r** have suffered a strong American influence. The **l** is rather cacuminal and the **r** quite Americanized. Nasalization has practically disappeared in York Co. For example, the vowel-sound in **schee, glee, duu** (likewise **geduu**) etc. is exactly like that of English "shay, clay, do". The short **o**-sound (as in **hocke**) has suffered some change and sounds less like German "o" in "wollen" and more like "u" in English "hut, but". The **a** before an **a** has the one sound **a** (and not **ae**): e. g., **karrich, darrich.** An **ae**-sound before **r** occurs in English words taken into the Dialect at an earlier period: e.g., **kaer, paert, schmaert.** Words like **moonet, woone** usually have the **o**-sound and not the **u** (i.e., muunet, wuune) heard in other counties.

In the main, I would say that the speakers in York Co. speak more slowly than those in Lehigh and environs. This observation has been made over a period of years and I am convinced that the number of words per minute in York Co. is less on the average than elsewhere.

This "taking a little more time" to speak makes (at least for me) a pleasant sounding language, having a little more expression in the sentence intonation than is to be found in the more rapidly spoken and at the same time rather strained and choked style of speaking.

Morphology:

1. Articles. The definite article has the following forms: sg.m. **der, m, der (de)**; f. **die, de, die**; n. **(e)s, m, (e)s**; pl. **die, de, die.** These forms are generally used elsewhere; also, a gen. sg. form **s** exists with proper names, as in **s Brauns.** The two possibilities in the masc. sg. acc. have never been thoroughly explained; one says, for example, **ich hab der mann gseene**, but **de anner daak wor ich do.**

The indefinite article is **n** throughout the nom. and acc. The dat. forms are: m. **me**, f. **re**, n. **me.**

2. The Substantive. The formation of the plural agrees pretty well with the five types which Buffington gives in his work, namely: (1) no ending, sometimes mutated, sometimes not, (2) **-er** plural, (3) **-e** pl., (4) **-s** pl. (from English), (5) the diminutives. Those adding **-er** are about the same as in German, but in the Pennsylvania German the majority of neuter nouns have this plural, often unlike the German; e. g., **dinger** (G. Dinge), **gebeier** (G. Gebaeude), etc. The **-e** plural type are those which generally have -en in German. Of the diminutives, those ending in the singular in **-che, -elche** have their plural in **-cher, or -elcher;** those ending in **-li, -(e)l in the singular have their plural in -elcher** (this does not agree with Buffington who says these have a plural in "-lin"); e.g., **Grischtkindli** or **Grischtkindl**, pl. **Grischtkindelcher.**

3. The Adjective. The Strong endings are: sg. m. **-er, -em, -er,** f. **-ie, -er, -ie,** n. ——, **-em,** ——; plu. **-ie, -e (-ie), -ie.** The Weak endings are as follows: sing. nom. and acc. have no ending; dat. throughout is **-e**; the pl. endings are **-ie, -e (-ie), -ie.** The Mixed endings are: sg. m. **-er, -e, -er,** f. **-ie, -e, -ie,** n. ——, **-e,** ——; pl. **-ie, -e (-ie), -ie.** It will be noted here that the plural has **-ie** in the Weak and Mixed declensions where one hears **-e** in other counties. Moreover, the dat. pl. ending **-ie** has been given because it is so frequently heard, although it appears to be an acc. ending; cf. **er wor bei sellie buuwe, mit seine guutie meed, fun de aldie weibsleit.** The adjective after the masc. acc. definite article **de** may have an ending **-e**; **de ganse daak;** "anner" does not seem to take this inflection—**de anner daak.** The Mixed ending for the neut. sg. nom. and acc. is usually no ending at all, but when used substantively the ending is **-es**: e.g., **sel is n guut buch,** but **sel is n guutes.**

As elsewhere, the comparative has **-er**, the superlative **-scht.** The irregulars are: groos greeser greescht, hoch heecher (heechscht), jung jinger jingscht, alt elder eldscht, kalt kelder keldscht, lang lenger lengscht, schpoot schpeeter schpootest, wolfel welfler (wolfler) welfescht, foll feller (foller) fellscht, guut besser bescht, neegscht (noo) neecher neegscht, glee glenner glennscht, schee schenner schennscht, arj- (arrick) arjer arrickscht, schtarj- (schtarrick) schtarjer schtarrikscht, fiel mee (meener) mennscht. In comparisons "than" is rendered usually by **as,** seldom by **wie.** When English has a repeated comparative, the Pennsylvania German has **als** with the comparative: e.g., **es watt als kelder,** it's getting colder and colder (German, immer kaelter).

The possessive adjectives are declined as follows: **mei, dei, sei** have no ending throughout the nom. and acc. sg. and pl.; the dat. forms are sg. m. **meim,** f. **meine,** n. **meim,** pl. **meine.** Note the fem. dat sg. form **meine;** elsewhere **meinre** seems to be more common. The forms of **ier** are: sg. m. **iere, ierem, iere,** f. **iere, iere, iere,** n. **iere, ierem, iere;** pl. **ier (e), iere, ier (e).** Unser and **eier** have no ending in the nom. and acc. throughout the singular. The dat. forms are: m. **unserm,** f. **unsere,** n. **unserm.** The pl. forms are: **unserie, unsere (ie), unserie.**

The demonstrative adjective—"this" has the forms: sg. m. **daer, dem, daer (den),** f. **die, denne (daere), die,** n. **des, dem, des;** pl. **die, denne, die.** (Note the fem. dat. sg. form **denne**). The masc. acc. sg. **den** occurs in phrases such as **den** owet, **den summer.** Note, however, the distinction between the following examples: **mer duune sel daer summer**—we'll do that next summer (ie., this summer coming); **mer hens den summer gedu**—we did it this past (or present) summer. "That" is inflected thus: sg. m. **seller, sellem, seller,** f. **sellie, sellre, sellie,** n. **sel, sellem, sel;** pl. **sellie, selle (ie), sellie.** Likewise the interrogative adjective and pronoun **weller, wellie, wel.**

4. Pronouns. The personal pronouns are generally the same as for other regions except that: the second person plural is **der,** stressed form **dier**—this pronoun is also found in Lancaster Co. and is probably of Swiss origin (Eshleman and Buffington are of this same opinion). The stressed form of the third person masc. sing. is pronounced **aer.**

Of the indefinite pronouns and pronominal adjectives I should like to point out the following: **epper** and **eppes** seem to be pronounced with a little more of a **p**-sound than a **b**-sound. "Nowhere" is expressed by **narjets,** "somewhere" by **amnintz,** less often by **arjets.** Lambert does not give **amnintz** in his Dictionary, but he does note **ammenoot** and **ammenent** and gives as their source the German "an einem Ort". The corresponding form to G. "kein" is **ken** (dat. sg. forms: **kem, kenne, kem**) in York County; one hears also a shorter form **ke** (the "e" here has the sound found in the word **net**), and also **kee** (no nasalization).

5. Numerals. The numerals are generally the same as those for other regions except that: **fier, finf, sechs, acht, nein, elf,** and **zwelf** are more often just one syllable words without the unaccented **-e** ending.

6. Adverbs. Some adverbs followed by an adjective are inflected: e.g., **sie hen n arjie guutie zeit kat, n wunderborie guutie zeit, n zimmlichie guutie zeit,** etc.

7. The Verb. The inflection of the verb in York Co. is generally like that of other Pennsylvania German districts except that the second person plural is the same as the first and third persons: e.g., **mer hen, der hen, sie hen** or **mer sin, der sin, sie sin, mer woone, der woone,** etc. **"Hawwe"** has two past participles **kat and kadde**—both are common. The third person sing. present indicative of **sei** is pronounced **iss.** Fischer wrote **isch** but I do not think this came from any York County contacts—rather from his many readings in various German and Swiss dialects.

The formation of the past participle in York County is somewhat different from that in the eastern counties. There is a tendency to shorten the prefix **ge-** as much as possible, so that at times it becomes scarcely audible. The form **ge-** is used before verbs beginning with b, d, t, g, k, and z (these are phonetic values); e.g., gebracht, geduu, "getraveled", "gejumped" (getschumpt), gegliche, gekitzelt, gezuckt. The prefix **g-** is used before f, j, l, m, n, r, s (sch), and w: e.g., gfunne, gjaert, gleese, gmeent, gnumme, grutscht, gseene, gschwetzt, gwest. The prefix **g-** is used before verbs beginning with a vowel, but there is a slight pause immediately following this **g-** which falls short of really being called an unaccented vowel-sound: e.g., **g'eekt, g'ennert.** As elsewhere, verbs beginning with **h** have their past participle in **k-**: e.g., **haere, kaert, gewwe, gange, grickt, gesse** are the same as for other sections of the Dialect. Note that the past participle of **kaafe** is **gekaaft** in York Co., and also that of **kaere** (belong) is **gekaert; kumme** seems to be the only one beginning with **k** which has no prefix in the past particle. Verbs with the inseparable prefixes fer-, be- (p-), aer-, ge-(g-), en (d)- have no extra prefix in the past participle. The verbs in **-iere**: Lambert cites 66 such verbs; he gives 32 of these as having no prefix in the past part., 27 with ge-(g-), 6 not indicated, and one (**browiere**) is given as having either ge- or no prefix. In York County the past part. of **browiere** is **browiert,** without the prefix.

The imperative: sing. has the stem of the verb; the plural adds **-et** to the stem: e.g., sg. **kumm,** pl. **kummet** (three others are found in other sections of Pennsylvania, namely **kumme, kummt,** and **kummen**). The imperatives of **sei** are: sg. **sei,** pl. **sein.**

The modal auxiliary verbs are the same as for the eastern counties except **welle** (subjunctive **wet**) and **selle** (subjunctive **set**). Eshleman thinks these forms are apparently of Swiss origin because they are common in Switzerland and infrequent in the Palatinate. Buffington also says this assimilation of "l" to the following dental in the subjunctive forms **wet** and **set** is an Alemannic characteristic. In the compound past tenses of the modals the infinitive is generally used even when not used with another verb: e.g., **ich hab welle, er hot misse,** but with an object, **ich habs gwellt (or gwett).**

In the so-called "double infinitive" construction the past participle may be used instead of the infinitive of one of the verbs (note that the order is the reverse of the German): e.g., **ich hab n haere schpiele** or **ich hab n kaert schpiele; er hot mich seene ins haus gee** or **er hot mich gseene ins haus gee.**

The present subjunctive is generally formed with the auxiliary **deet** plus infinitive. The following verbs have a single-form subjunctive (formerly known as the imperfect subjunctive): brauche (breicht, pl. breichde), gee (gingt, gingde), kumme (keemt, keemde), hawwe (het, hette), sei (waer, waere), welle (wet, wette), selle (set, sette), misse (mist, miste), kenne (kent, kente), darfe (darft, darfte), meeje (meecht, meechde), gewwe (geebt, geebte), wisse (wist, wiste), duu (deet, deede). The subjunctive forms breecht (from bringe) and greecht (grieje) are not generally known in York Co.

The verb **brauche, gebraucht (need)** is inflected in the present tense thus: ich brauch, du brauchscht er brauch; mer, der, sie brauche. Note the lack of the -t ending in the third person sing.; this may be analogous to the other so-called preterite-present verbs such as the modals and **wisse.** "Er braucht" means "he pow-wows". The verb "to need" (as given above, brauche) is usually "breiche, gebreicht" in the other counties, with the present **sing.** as given above and the plural "breiche". In York County there are no strong verbs having a vowel-change in the second and third persons of the present indicative: e.g., **er saagt** (not **secht**), **er schlaagt** (not **schlecht**). Also, the forms **geene, duune, schteene** (plural of the present indicative) are disyllabic in York Co. whereas in some regions the final "e" is dropped.

Vocabulary: As regards vocabulary, it should be noted at the outset that the Dialect in York County is more filled with English loan-words than that of the eastern counties. Just what the percentage of this borrowing is depends on the speaker, the situation and the topic of conversation. The "essentials," such as names of things around the house and farm (excluding new gadgets) and verbs expressing the fundamental motions of life, remain pure Dialect words. Business talk about marketing and the like is peppered with phrases borrowed from the English. Loan-nouns comprise perhaps the largest group; loan-verbs the second largest—most of these are made weak if not already so in English (note, however, **gwore** from "wear"). Strangely enough, often a borrowed adjective or adverb will be used: e.g., "different" is regularly used for **unnerschittlich,** or one may hear **sel waer net so "bad",** etc. This strong English admixture goes hand in hand with the fact that the Dialect in York Co. is rapidly dying out.

Exclusive of English words one finds in York Co. a number of unusual and interesting Dialect words. One's parents are probably more often called **fodder** and **mudder** than by any of the other substitutes. There may be some High German influence here. A word like **der potter** (pl. **pottre**) for "bead" certainly deserves special attention. The Schweizerisches Idiotikon gives this word as being a shortening of Pater Noster, or the Lord's Prayer, said while counting the beads of the rosary and hence it has come to mean the rosary itself and also the beads in it. "Arewet" is nearly always trisyllabic. Space limits here the mention of other such examples—I am continually on the watch for such interesting words and expressions.

I have tried to give here some of the main characteristics of the pronunciation and the forms in the Pennsylvania German Dialect of York County; I should be grateful to anyone for contributions on any phase of this subject.

EMMAUS

(Written after the officials of that fair borough of Lehigh County had concluded to change its name from the uneuphonious EMAUS to the biblical EMMAUS.)

Sie kumme mitnanner so schee aus,
Var Alders, im Schtedtelche "E-maus;"
En Riggelweg graad mittee daerrich,
Uf yedre Seit Waertschaft un Kaerrich,
Un Heiser mit Hof un mit Gaarde,
Mer kennt's yo net schenner erwarde,
Un lauter so rechtschaffne Leit.

Dann lest emol eener die Biewel—
Mer nemme's ihm aa net far iwwel—
Er lest mol vun owwe bis unne,
Do hot er en Schtedtel drin g'funne,
Es guckt em e bisselche fremm aus,
Der Naame vum Schtedtel waar Emmaus;
Jerusalem waar net so weit.

Noh pischbert er dann zumme Nochber,
Der Nochber der Fraa un der Dochter,
Es wischpelt so unnich de Kinner,
Un glei iss es Schtedtel dehinner;
Doch die, iwwerm Riggelweg, driwwe,
Die meene net so wie die hiwwe,
Sie meene die hiwwe verdrehe's
Un daafe des Schtedtel "Em-ma-us;"
Far sell iss noch immer der Schtreit.

Was mache die Schwowe far G'schichte!
Der Schtreit iss net hendich zu schlichte.
Die "E-mauser" kumme net riwwer,
"Em-ma-us-er" gehne net niwwer,
Mer meent yo sie daede's far Schpeit.
Die hiwwe hen Boulevard Lichter,
Verleicht e paar Englische G'sichter;
Die driwwe sin naecher am Hiwwel,
Sie draage kippledderne Schtiwwel,
Un duhn sie der Fuss emol runner,
Dann heere die hiwwe Gedunner,
Un wisse aa was es bedeit.

Des sin emol missliche Dinge,
Es losse die Leit sich net zwinge.
Ya, waer mer uf des un uf dem aus,
Do kennt mer aa saage 's waer "Emmaus,"
Un sel waer verleicht yuscht so g'scheit.

—JOHN BIRMELIN

Goosebone Prophecy

How many of our readers remember Elias Hartz, Reading's weather prophet of a generation ago?

Pennsylvania German folklore contains many forms of weather interpreters. Each season of the year provides some phenomena which told our ancestors what the weather would be like in the immediate future. Spiders' webs and tree frogs announce the signs in the summer months, squirrels and hickory leaves presaged the autumn. The ground hog and goose bone were the indicators during the winter months.

Recent loyalties have turned toward the prophecies of the ground hog and his Candelmas (Feb. 2) shadow, but there are still those who subscribe to the message which the goose bone tells. Outstanding among present day goose bone prophets is Willoughby Troxell, of Lehigh County, who recently scored a triumph by predicting correctly that we would have a "green Christmas and a white New Year." The goose bone told him so, long in advance of the season.

At the turn of the present century Reading too had her goose bone prophet. Elias Hartz, born in Robeson Township in 1815 lived to an advanced age. He was still living in 1902. His ancestor, Jacob Hartz, had come to America in 1751 on the ship PHOENIX, in company with the immigrant ancestor of I. Daniel Rupp, the first Pennsylvania German historian. Jacob Hartz fought in the American Revolutionary War and afterwards drove a team between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. He died as a result of a kick by a mule. The widow of Jacob Hartz died during the time the Schuylkill canal was being built through Reading. She was a victim of a dreaded malady then known as "canal fever."

Elias, the goose bone prophet, descendant of Jacob Hartz, was described by those who knew him as a white-haired man whose profile greatly resembled that of the poet Longfellow.

For his weather prognostications Elias Hartz used the breast bone of a goose, but it had to be the breast bone of a goose hatched during the spring just before the prophecies were to be applied. The weather could be foretold by studying the dark spots which appear on the bone.

The conflict between the claims of the ground hog and the goose bone devotees has provided subject material for much facetious philosophical debate at the various assemblies of the Grundsau lodges of eastern Pennsylvania. Neophytes initiated into the various orders must renounce their faith in the goose bone before being received into the Grundau membership. — In this way our Pennsylvania Germans of an enlightened era have capitalized upon their own folklore and created for themselves their very own brand of fun.

—Arthur D. Graeff.